



NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Receives Top Grades for Air Quality

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota received straight A's for air quality in a report entitled "State of the Air: 2004" released by the American Lung Association, according to Terry O'Clair, director of the Division of Air Quality for the North Dakota Department of Health.

The report for the first time assessed levels of both particulate and ozone pollution. Particulate pollution comes from many sources, including power plants and industry, vehicle exhaust and wind blown dust. Ozone pollution is formed when noxious gases from sources like power plants and vehicle exhaust combine with sunlight and heat. Both types of pollution can cause breathing and health problems. Nationally, 159 million Americans live in counties with unhealthy levels of either ozone or particulate pollution.

"The North Dakota Department of Health is pleased with the American Lung Association report card that recognizes North Dakota as having some of the cleanest air in the nation," said State Health Officer Dr. Terry Dwelle, M.D., M.P.H.T.M. "Clean air is vital for a healthy population. We are committed to safeguarding the air of our state and the health of every North Dakotan."

The report comes on the heels of a determination by the Environmental Protection Agency, released in mid-April, indicating that North Dakota is one of only 19 states that meet new federal standards for ozone.

For more information about air quality in North Dakota, contact Terry O'Clair at 701.328.5188. To view the American Lung Association report, log onto www.lungusa.org.

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